

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202-2575

FY 2012 APPLICATION PACKAGE FOR NEW GRANTS
UNDER
THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY AND REHABILITATION
RESEARCH

REHABILITATION RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTERS (RRTC)

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Developing Strategies to Meet
Employer Needs in Changing Economic Environments

CFDA NUMBER: 84.133B-1

FORM APPROVED



OMB No. 1820-0027, EXP. DATE 03/31/2013
SF FORM 424, 1/31/2012

DATED MATERIAL - OPEN IMMEDIATELY
CLOSING DATE: August 27, 2012

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SECTION A

DEAR APPLICANT LETTER

July 13, 2012

Dear Applicant:

The Secretary invites applications for a new award in fiscal year (FY) 2012 under the Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers program, for a RRTC on Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Developing Strategies to Meet Employer Needs in Changing Economic Environments (CFDA Number - 84.133B-1). NIDRR is seeking applications that address all elements of the priority, and that propose appropriate, high-quality research methodologies. It is critical that proposals describe expected public benefits, especially benefits for individuals with disabilities, and propose projects that are designed to demonstrate outcomes that are consistent with the proposed goals.

The start date for new awards for the (FY) 2012 programs will be no later than October 1, 2012.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

This application package contains information and the required forms for potential applicants to apply and be considered for a FY 2012 grant award under this competition, including the published Federal Register notice dated July 13, 2012. The background statement from the Notice of Proposed Priorities is in Section D.

The closing date (application deadline) is **August 27, 2012**.

Potential applicants are advised to read the materials in this application package carefully. Please pay particular attention to the information contained in the Notice Inviting Applications on the eligible applicants and the dollar amount available for this competition, Section F – the Selection Criteria, Section G – Protection of Human Subjects, and Section H – Application Format and Instructions. Applications must be responsive to the absolute priority in Section C and the statutory, regulatory, and general requirements for the RRTC program in Section E. The application narrative should be written in the order of the selection criteria in Section F. The selection criteria will be used by the reviewers to evaluate the application.

Include a one-page abstract. The abstract is a critical component of the proposal, and it should describe the purpose, target population to be served during the project period, planned goals and objectives, proposed methodological approach, and anticipated project outcomes.

Award Amounts and Restricted Indirect Cost Rate

We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding the amount of \$650,000 for a single budget period of 12 months for the RRTC on Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Developing Strategies to Meet Employer Needs in Changing Economic Environments (CFDA Number - 84.133B-1). The maximum indirect cost rate is 15%.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

You **must** submit your application electronically through using the Grants.gov Apply site. See Section B, Notice Inviting Applications and Section J, Application Transmittal Instructions.

NOTE: You will be uploading sections of your application by heading. There is a heading for: (1)) Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424); (2) Table of Contents; (3) Abstract; (4) ED Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED-524); (5) Budget Narrative; (6) Project Narrative; (7) General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Requirements – Section 427; (8) GG Lobbying Form (90-0013); (9) Faith Based Survey on EEO; (10) ED Supplemental Form for SF 424; (11) SF LLL Disclosure of Lobbying; and (12) Vitae/Bibliography/Letters of Support. There is a file-size limitation to each section, and you may upload only one document under each heading. Therefore, in order to make sure that all of your materials are uploaded successfully, you will need to combine multiple original documents for a heading (e.g., letters, resumes) into a single document before uploading.

Electronic copies must be fully uploaded on the Grants.gov site by 4:30:00 pm, Washington DC time on the closing, **August 27, 2012**. This process may take several hours. Therefore, please allow several hours or a full day to submit your application. If there is a submission error, additional time will be needed to correct the error and resubmit. **We encourage you to read Section J – Grants.gov Submission Procedures and Tips for Applicants**

PROGRAM REGULATIONS

These grants are subject to the requirements of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), in 34 CFR Parts 74, 75, 77, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 86, and 97, which set forth general rules affecting the submittal, review, grant award, and post-award administration for Department of Education grant programs.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Pre-Application Meeting: A pre-application meeting will be held between 1:00 p.m. and on **August 3, 2012** by teleconference. Interested parties are invited to participate in the pre-application meeting to discuss the funding priority and to receive information and technical assistance. You must contact Marlene Spencer at marlene.spencer@ed.gov by **August 2, 2012** in order to participate in this meeting. NIDRR staff also will be available to provide information and technical assistance via individual phone consultations from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on **August 3, 2012**. Requests for individual consultations during this one hour window must be made in advance to Marlene Spencer.

If you have any questions about the information in this application package, please contact Marlene Spencer at marlene.spencer@ed.gov or by telephone at (202) 245-7532 or Lynn Medley at lynn.medley@ed.gov or by telephone at (202) 245-7338. Individuals who use a telecommunications device (TDD) may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., EST, Monday through Friday.

If you experience problems submitting your application through Grants.gov, please contact the Grants.gov Support Desk, toll free, at 1-800-518-4726.

Thank you for your interest in these programs.

Sincerely,

K. Charlie Lakin
Director,
National Institute on Disability and
Rehabilitation Research

SECTION B

NOTICE INVITING APPLICATIONS FOR NEW AWARDS

4000-01-U

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR)--Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program--Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTCs) on Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Developing Strategies to Meet Employer Needs in Changing Economic Environments.

AGENCY: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education

ACTION: Notice.

Overview Information:

National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR)--Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program--Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTCs) on Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Developing Strategies to Meet Employer Needs in Changing Economic Environments.

Notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 2012.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 84.133B-1.

Dates:

Applications Available: July 13, 2012.

Date of Pre-Application Meeting: August 3, 2012.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: August 27, 2012.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program is to plan and conduct research, demonstration projects, training, and related activities, including international activities; to develop methods, procedures, and rehabilitation technology that maximize the full inclusion and integration into society, employment, independent living, family support, and economic and social self-sufficiency of individuals with disabilities, especially individuals with the most severe disabilities; and to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Rehabilitation Act).

Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)

The purpose of the RRTCs, which are funded through the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program, is to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act, through advanced research, training, technical assistance, and dissemination activities in general problem areas, as specified by NIDRR. Such activities are designed to benefit rehabilitation service providers, individuals with disabilities, and the family members or other authorized representatives of individuals with disabilities. Additional information on the RRTC program can be found at:

www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/res-program.html#RRTC.

Priorities: This competition includes two absolute priorities. The General RRTC Requirements priority is from the notice of final priorities for the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program, published in the Federal Register on February 1, 2008 (73 FR 6132) and the RRTC on Vocational Rehabilitation and Developing Strategies to Meet Employer Needs in Changing Economic Environments priority is from the notice of final priority for this program, published elsewhere in this issue of the Federal Register.

Absolute Priorities: For FY 2012 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applicants from this competition, these priorities are absolute priorities.

Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) we consider only applications that meet these priorities.

These priorities are:

- (1) General RRTC Requirements.
- (2) RRTC on Vocational Rehabilitation and Developing Strategies to Meet Employer Needs in Changing Economic Environments.

Note: The full text of these priorities is included in the pertinent notice of final priority or priorities published in the Federal Register and in the application package for this competition.

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 762(g) and 764(b)(2).

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 86, and 97. (b) The Education Department suspension and debarment regulations in 2 CFR part 3485. (c) The regulations for this program in 34 CFR part 350. (d) The notice of final priorities for the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers program, published in the Federal Register on February 1, 2008 (73 FR 6132). (e) The notice of final priority for this program, published elsewhere in this issue of the Federal Register.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 86 apply to institutions of higher education (IHEs) only.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants.

Estimated Available Funds: \$650,000.

Contingent upon the availability of funds and the quality of applications, we may make additional awards in FY 2013 from the list of approved but unfunded applicants from this competition.

Maximum Award: We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding \$650,000 for a single budget period of 12 months. The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the Federal Register.

Estimated Number of Awards: 1.

Note: The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants: States; public or private agencies, including for-profit agencies; public or private organizations, including for-profit organizations; IHEs; and Indian tribes and tribal organizations.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching: This competition does not require cost sharing or matching.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package: You can obtain an application package via the Internet or from the Education Publications Center (ED Pubs). To obtain a copy via the Internet, use the following address:

www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/grantapps/index.html. To obtain a copy from ED Pubs, write, fax, or call the following: ED Pubs,

U.S. Department of Education, P.O. Box 22207, Alexandria, VA 22304. Telephone, toll free: 1-877-433-7827. FAX: (703) 605-6794. If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) or a text telephone (TTY), call, toll free: 1-877-576-7734.

You can contact ED Pubs at its Web site, also: www.EDPubs.gov or at its e-mail address: edpubs@inet.ed.gov.

If you request an application package from ED Pubs, be sure to identify this competition as follows: CFDA number 84.133B-1.

Individuals with disabilities can obtain a copy of the application package in an accessible format (e.g., braille, large print, audiotape, or compact disc) by contacting the person or team listed under Accessible Format in section VIII of this notice.

2. a. Content and Form of Application Submission:

Requirements concerning the content of an application, together with the forms you must submit, are in the application package for this competition.

Page Limit: The application narrative (Part III of the application) is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. We recommend that you limit Part III to the equivalent of no more than 125 pages, using the following standards:

- A "page" is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.
- Double space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, including titles,

headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs.

- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch).

- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

The recommended page limit does not apply to Part I, the cover sheet; Part II, the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; Part IV, the assurances and certifications; or the one-page abstract, the resumes, the bibliography, or the letters of support. However, the recommended page limit does apply to all of the application narrative section (Part III).

The application package will provide instructions for completing all components to be included in the application. Each application must include a cover sheet (Standard Form 424); budget requirements (ED Form 524) and narrative justification; other required forms; an abstract, Human Subjects narrative, Part III narrative; resumes of staff; and other related materials, if applicable.

2. b. Submission of Proprietary Information:

Given the types of projects that may be proposed in applications for this competition, an application may include business information that an applicant considers proprietary. The Department's regulations define "business information" in 34 CFR 5.11.

Because we plan to make the narrative portions of the applications selected for funding available to the public, you may wish to request confidentiality of business information. Consistent with Executive Order 12600, please designate in your application any information that you feel is exempt from disclosure under Exemption 4 of the Freedom of Information Act. In the appropriate Appendix section of your application, under "Other Attachments Form," please list the page number or numbers on which we can find this information. For additional information, please see 34 CFR 5.11(c).

2. c. Accessibility of Application Narratives. To ensure accessibility of application information posted on the Department's Web site, applicants selected for funding under this competition will be required to provide an electronic copy of the narrative portion of their application that is accessible to individuals with disabilities. Guidelines on preparing accessible documents in various formats are available at: <http://www2.ed.gov/internal/internalguidelines.html>.

3. Submission Dates and Times:
Applications Available: July 13, 2012.
Date of Pre-Application Meeting: Interested parties are invited to participate in a pre-application meeting and to receive information and technical assistance through individual consultation with NIDRR staff. The pre-application meeting will be held on August 3, 2012. Interested parties may participate in this meeting by conference call with NIDRR staff from the

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services between 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m., Washington, DC time. NIDRR staff also will be available from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the same day, by telephone, to provide information and technical assistance through individual consultation. For further information or to make arrangements to participate in the meeting via conference call or for an individual consultation, contact either Lynn Medley or Marlene Spencer as follows:

Lynn Medley, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5140, Potomac Center Plaza (PCP), Washington, DC 20202-2700. Telephone: (202) 245-7338 or by e-mail: Lynn.Medley@ed.gov.

Marlene Spencer, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5133, PCP, Washington, DC 20202-2700. Telephone: (202) 245-7532 or by e-mail: Marlene.Spencer@ed.gov.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: August 27, 2012.

Applications for grants under this competition must be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site (Grants.gov). For information (including dates and times) about how to submit your application electronically, or in paper format by mail or hand delivery if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, please refer to section IV. 7. Other Submission Requirements of this notice.

We do not consider an application that does not comply with the deadline requirements.

Individuals with disabilities who need an accommodation or auxiliary aid in connection with the application process should contact the person listed under For Further Information Contact in section VII of this notice. If the Department provides an accommodation or auxiliary aid to an individual with a disability in connection with the application process, the individual's application remains subject to all other requirements and limitations in this notice.

4. Intergovernmental Review: This program is not subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79.

5. Funding Restrictions: We reference regulations outlining funding restrictions in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

6. Data Universal Numbering System Number, Taxpayer Identification Number, and Central Contractor Registry: To do business with the Department of Education, you must--

a. Have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN);

b. Register both your DUNS number and TIN with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR), the Government's primary registrant database;

c. Provide your DUNS number and TIN on your application; and

d. Maintain an active CCR registration with current information while your application is under review by the Department and, if you are awarded a grant, during the project period.

You can obtain a DUNS number from Dun and Bradstreet. A DUNS number can be created within one business day.

If you are a corporate entity, agency, institution, or organization, you can obtain a TIN from the Internal Revenue Service. If you are an individual, you can obtain a TIN from the Internal Revenue Service or the Social Security Administration. If you need a new TIN, please allow 2-5 weeks for your TIN to become active.

The CCR registration process may take five or more business days to complete. If you are currently registered with the CCR, you may not need to make any changes. However, please make certain that the TIN associated with your DUNS number is correct. Also note that you will need to update your CCR registration on an annual basis. This may take three or more business days to complete.

In addition, if you are submitting your application via Grants.gov, you must (1) be designated by your organization as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR); and (2) register yourself with Grants.gov as an AOR. Details on these steps are outlined at the following Grants.gov Web page: www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp.

7. Other Submission Requirements: Applications for grants under this competition must be submitted electronically unless you qualify for an exception to this requirement in accordance with the instructions in this section.

a. Electronic Submission of Applications.

Applications for grants under RRTC on Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Developing Strategies to Meet Employer Needs in Changing Economic Environments, CFDA number 84.133B-1, must be submitted electronically using the Governmentwide Grants.gov Apply site at www.Grants.gov. Through this site, you will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit your application. You may not e-mail an electronic copy of a grant application to us.

We will reject your application if you submit it in paper format unless, as described elsewhere in this section, you qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement and submit, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that you qualify for one of these exceptions. Further information regarding calculation of the date that is two weeks before the application deadline date is provided later in this section under Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement.

You may access the electronic grant application for the RRTC on VR and Developing Strategies to Meet Employer Needs in Changing Economic Environments at www.Grants.gov. You must

search for the downloadable application package for this competition by the CFDA number. Do not include the CFDA number's alpha suffix in your search (e.g., search for 84.133, not 84.133B).

Please note the following:

- When you enter the Grants.gov site, you will find information about submitting an application electronically through the site, as well as the hours of operation.
- Applications received by Grants.gov are date and time stamped. Your application must be fully uploaded and submitted and must be date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system no later than 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. Except as otherwise noted in this section, we will not accept your application if it is received--that is, date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system--after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. We do not consider an application that does not comply with the deadline requirements. When we retrieve your application from Grants.gov, we will notify you if we are rejecting your application because it was date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.
- The amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors, including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you do not wait until the

application deadline date to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

- You should review and follow the Education Submission Procedures for submitting an application through Grants.gov that are included in the application package for this competition to ensure that you submit your application in a timely manner to the Grants.gov system. You can also find the Education Submission Procedures pertaining to Grants.gov under News and Events on the Department's G5 system home page at www.G5.gov.

- You will not receive additional point value because you submit your application in electronic format, nor will we penalize you if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, as described elsewhere in this section, and submit your application in paper format.

- You must submit all documents electronically, including all information you typically provide on the following forms: the Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424), the Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424, Budget Information--Non-Construction Programs (ED 524), and all necessary assurances and certifications.

- You must upload any narrative sections and all other attachments to your application as files in a PDF (Portable Document) read-only, non-modifiable format. Do not upload an interactive or fillable PDF file. If you upload a file type other than a read-only, non-modifiable PDF or submit a password-protected file, we will not review that material.

- Your electronic application must comply with any page-limit requirements described in this notice.

- After you electronically submit your application, you will receive from Grants.gov an automatic notification of receipt that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. (This notification indicates receipt by Grants.gov only, not receipt by the Department.) The Department then will retrieve your application from Grants.gov and send a second notification to you by e-mail. This second notification indicates that the Department has received your application and has assigned your application a PR/Award number (an ED-specified identifying number unique to your application).

- We may request that you provide us original signatures on forms at a later date.

Application Deadline Date Extension in Case of Technical Issues with the Grants.gov System: If you are experiencing problems submitting your application through Grants.gov, please contact the Grants.gov Support Desk, toll free, at 1-800-518-4726. You must obtain a Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number and must keep a record of it.

If you are prevented from electronically submitting your application on the application deadline date because of technical problems with the Grants.gov system, we will grant you an extension until 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, the following business day to enable you to transmit your application electronically or by hand delivery. You also may

mail your application by following the mailing instructions described elsewhere in this notice.

If you submit an application after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date, please contact the person listed under For Further Information Contact in section VII of this notice and provide an explanation of the technical problem you experienced with Grants.gov, along with the Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number. We will accept your application if we can confirm that a technical problem occurred with the Grants.gov system and that that problem affected your ability to submit your application by 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. The Department will contact you after a determination is made on whether your application will be accepted.

Note: The extensions to which we refer in this section apply only to the unavailability of, or technical problems with, the Grants.gov system. We will not grant you an extension if you failed to fully register to submit your application to Grants.gov before the application deadline date and time or if the technical problem you experienced is unrelated to the Grants.gov system.

Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement: You qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, and may submit your application in paper format, if you are unable to submit an application through the Grants.gov system because--

- You do not have access to the Internet; or

- You do not have the capacity to upload large documents to the Grants.gov system;

and

- No later than two weeks before the application deadline date (14 calendar days or, if the fourteenth calendar day before the application deadline date falls on a Federal holiday, the next business day following the Federal holiday), you mail or fax a written statement to the Department, explaining which of the two grounds for an exception prevent you from using the Internet to submit your application.

If you mail your written statement to the Department, it must be postmarked no later than two weeks before the application deadline date. If you fax your written statement to the Department, we must receive the faxed statement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.

Address and mail or fax your statement to: Marlene Spencer, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5133, PCP, Washington, DC 20202-2700. FAX: (202) 245-7323.

Your paper application must be submitted in accordance with the mail or hand delivery instructions described in this notice.

b. Submission of Paper Applications by Mail.

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you may mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier) your application to the Department. You must mail the original and two copies of your

application, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: (CFDA Number 84.133B-1)
LBJ Basement Level 1
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202-4260

You must show proof of mailing consisting of one of the following:

- (1) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark.
- (2) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service.
- (3) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier.
- (4) Any other proof of mailing acceptable to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

If you mail your application through the U.S. Postal Service, we do not accept either of the following as proof of mailing:

- (1) A private metered postmark.
- (2) A mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service.

If your application is postmarked after the application deadline date, we will not consider your application.

Note: The U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Before relying on this method, you should check with your local post office.

c. Submission of Paper Applications by Hand Delivery.

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you (or a courier service) may deliver your paper application to the Department by hand. You must deliver the original and two copies of your application by hand, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: (CFDA Number 84.133B-1)
550 12th Street, SW.
Room 7041, Potomac Center Plaza
Washington, DC 20202-4260

The Application Control Center accepts hand deliveries daily between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, except Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays.

Note for Mail or Hand Delivery of Paper Applications: If you mail or hand deliver your application to the Department--

(1) You must indicate on the envelope and--if not provided by the Department--in Item 11 of the SF 424 the CFDA number, including suffix letter, if any, of the competition under which you are submitting your application; and

(2) The Application Control Center will mail to you a notification of receipt of your grant application. If you do not receive this notification within 15 business days from the application deadline date, you should call the U.S. Department of Education Application Control Center at (202) 245-6288.

V. Application Review Information

1. Selection Criteria: The selection criteria for this competition are from 34 CFR 350.54 and are listed in the application package.

2. Review and Selection Process: We remind potential applicants that in reviewing applications in any discretionary grant competition, the Secretary may consider, under 34 CFR 75.217(d)(3), the past performance of the applicant in carrying out a previous award, such as the applicant's use of funds, achievement of project objectives, and compliance with grant conditions. The Secretary may also consider whether the applicant failed to submit a timely performance report or submitted a report of unacceptable quality.

In addition, in making a competitive grant award, the Secretary also requires various assurances including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department of Education (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

3. Special Conditions: Under 34 CFR 74.14 and 80.12, the Secretary may impose special conditions on a grant if the

applicant or grantee is not financially stable; has a history of unsatisfactory performance; has a financial or other management system that does not meet the standards in 34 CFR parts 74 or 80, as applicable; has not fulfilled the conditions of a prior grant; or is otherwise not responsible.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices: If your application is successful, we notify your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators and send you a Grant Award Notification (GAN). We may notify you informally, also.

If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we notify you.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements: We identify administrative and national policy requirements in the application package and reference these and other requirements in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice and include these and other specific conditions in the GAN. The GAN also incorporates your approved application as part of your binding commitments under the grant.

3. Reporting: (a) If you apply for a grant under this competition, you must ensure that you have in place the necessary processes and systems to comply with the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 170 should you receive funding under

the competition. This does not apply if you have an exception under 2 CFR 170.110(b).

(b) At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Secretary. If you receive a multi-year award, you must submit an annual performance report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information as directed by the Secretary under 34 CFR 75.118. The Secretary may also require more frequent performance reports under 34 CFR 75.720(c). For specific requirements on reporting, please go to www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html.

4. Performance Measures: To evaluate the overall success of its research program, NIDRR assesses the quality of its funded projects through a review of grantee performance and products. Each year, NIDRR examines a portion of its grantees to determine:

- The percentage of NIDRR-supported fellows, post-doctoral trainees, and doctoral students who publish results of NIDRR-sponsored research in refereed journals.

- The number of products (e.g., new or improved tools, methods, discoveries, standards, interventions, programs, or devices developed or tested with NIDRR funding) that have been judged by expert panels to be of high quality and to advance the field.

- The average number of publications per award based on NIDRR-funded research and development activities in refereed journals.

- The percentage of new NIDRR grants that assess the effectiveness of interventions, programs, and devices using rigorous methods.

NIDRR uses information submitted by grantees as part of their Annual Performance Reports (APRs) for these reviews.

Department of Education program performance reports, which include information on NIDRR programs, are available on the Department's Web site:

www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oeped/sas/index.html.

5. Continuation Awards: In making a continuation award, the Secretary may consider, under 34 CFR 75.253, the extent to which a grantee has made "substantial progress toward meeting the objectives in its approved application." This consideration includes the review of a grantee's progress in meeting the targets and projected outcomes in its approved application, and whether the grantee has expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and budget. In making a continuation grant, the Secretary also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance with the assurances in its approved application, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

VII. Agency Contacts

For Further Information Contact: Lynn Medley or Marlene Spencer as follows:

Lynn Medley, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5140, PCP, Washington, DC 20202-2700.
Telephone: (202) 245-7338 or by e-mail: Lynn.Medley@ed.gov.

Marlene Spencer, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5133, PCP, Washington, DC 20202-2700.
Telephone: (202) 245-7532 or by e-mail: Marlene.Spencer@ed.gov.

If you use a TDD or TTY, call the FRS, toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

VIII. Other Information

Accessible Format: Individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and a copy of the application package in an accessible format (e.g., braille, large print, audiotape, or compact disc) by contacting the Grants and Contracts Services Team, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5075, PCP, Washington, DC 20202-2550. Telephone: (202) 245-7363. If you use a TDD or a TTY, call the FRS, toll-free, at 1-800-877-8339.

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Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF). To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

You may also access documents of the Department published in the Federal Register by using the article search feature at: www.federalregister.gov. Specifically, through the advanced search feature at this site, you can limit your search to documents published by the Department.

Dated:

Alexa Posny,
Assistant Secretary for
Special Education and
Rehabilitative Services.

SECTION C

NOTICE OF FINAL PRIORITY

4000-01-U

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CFDA Number: 84.133B-1

Final priority; National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR)--Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program--Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Developing Strategies to Meet Employer Needs in Changing Economic Environments

AGENCY: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services announces a priority for the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program administered by NIDRR. Specifically, this priority is for an RRTC on VR and developing strategies to meet employer needs in changing economic environments. The Assistant Secretary may use this priority for competitions in fiscal year (FY) 2012 and later years. We take this action to focus research attention on areas of national need. We intend this priority to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This priority is effective August 13, 2012.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Marlene Spencer, U.S.

Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5133,

Potomac Center Plaza (PCP), Washington, DC 20202-2700.

Telephone: (202) 245-7532 or by e-mail:

marlene.spencer@ed.gov.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) or a text telephone (TTY), call the Federal Relay Service (FRS), toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

This notice of final priority (NFP) is in concert with NIDRR's currently approved Long-Range Plan (Plan). The Plan, which was published in the Federal Register on February 15, 2006 (71 FR 8165), can be accessed on the Internet at:

www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ose/nidrr/policy.html.

By implementing the Plan, NIDRR seeks to: (1) Improve the quality and utility of disability and rehabilitation research; (2) foster an exchange of expertise, information, and training to facilitate the advancement of knowledge and understanding of the unique needs of traditionally underserved populations; (3) determine best strategies and programs to improve rehabilitation outcomes for underserved populations; (4) identify research gaps; (5) identify mechanisms of integrating research and practice; and (6) disseminate findings.

This notice announces a final priority that NIDRR intends to use for a RRTC competition in FY 2012 and possibly later years. However, nothing precludes NIDRR from publishing additional priorities, if needed. Furthermore, NIDRR is under no obligation to make an award for this priority. The decision

to make an award will be based on the quality of applications received and available funding.

Purpose of Program:

The purpose of the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program is to plan and conduct research, demonstration projects, training, and related activities, including international activities; to develop methods, procedures, and rehabilitation technology that maximize the full inclusion and integration into society, employment, independent living, family support, and economic and social self-sufficiency of individuals with disabilities, especially individuals with the most severe disabilities; and to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Rehabilitation Act).

Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)

The purpose of the RRTCs, which are funded through the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program, is to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act, through advanced research, training, technical assistance, and dissemination activities in general problem areas, as specified by NIDRR. Such activities are designed to benefit rehabilitation service providers, individuals with disabilities, and the family members or other authorized representatives of individuals with disabilities. Additional information on the RRTC program can be found at:

www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/res-program.html#RRTC.

Statutory and Regulatory Requirements of RRTCs

RRTCs must--

- Carry out coordinated and advanced programs of rehabilitation research;
- Provide training, including graduate, pre-service, and in-service training, to help rehabilitation personnel more effectively provide rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities;
- Provide technical assistance to individuals with disabilities, their representatives, providers, and other interested parties;
- Disseminate informational materials to individuals with disabilities, their representatives, providers, and other interested parties; and
- Serve as centers of national excellence in rehabilitation research for individuals with disabilities, their representatives, providers, and other interested parties.

Applicants for RRTC grants must also demonstrate in their applications how they will address, in whole or in part, the needs of individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds.

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 762(g) and 764(b)(2).

Applicable Program Regulations: 34 CFR part 350.

We published a notice of proposed priority for this program in the Federal Register on May 8, 2012 (77 FR 27035). That

notice contained background information and our reasons for proposing this particular priority.

Public Comment: In response to our invitation in the notice of proposed priority, one party submitted comments on the proposed priority.

Generally, we do not address technical and other minor changes. In addition, we do not address general comments that raised concerns not directly related to the proposed priority.

Analysis of Comments and Changes: An analysis of the comments and of any changes in the priority since publication of the notice of proposed priority follows.

Comment: The commenter asked whether under the priority, the RRTC could conduct research on employer demand strategies in countries outside of the United States.

Discussion: RRTCs are funded under the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers program. The regulations for this program (34 CFR 350.2) indicate that its purpose is to plan and conduct research, demonstration projects, training, and related activities, including international activities. This RRTC must conduct research that contributes to identifying effective VR practices that take into account economic conditions, labor market trends, and employer needs. Nothing in the priority precludes the RRTC from conducting research on employer demand strategies in countries outside of the United States, so long as the results of the research are generalizable to the workforce needs and expectations of

potential employers of individuals receiving services from State VR agencies and can be used to contribute to the intended outcomes of the priority.

Changes: None.

Comment: The commenter asked whether under the priority, the RRTC could conduct research activities with an employer or industry.

Discussion: This RRTC must conduct research that contributes to identifying effective VR practices that take into account economic conditions, labor market trends, and employer needs. Nothing in the priority precludes the RRTC from conducting research with an employer or industry, so long as the results of the research can be used to contribute to the intended outcomes of the priority.

Changes: None.

Comment: The commenter asked how NIDRR distinguishes between research and development activities. The commenter also asked how NIDRR defines a development activity.

- Discussion: Descriptions of research and development activities are provided in the regulations for NIDRR's Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects program. These regulations apply to a broad range of NIDRR's grant mechanisms, including RRTCs, and describe a research activity as an "intensive systematic study directed toward new or full scientific knowledge, or understanding of the subject or problem studied." 34 CFR 350.13. The regulations describe a

development activity as using “knowledge and understanding gained from research to create materials, devices, systems, or methods beneficial to the target population, including the design and development of prototypes and processes.” 34 CFR 350.16.

Changes: None.

Comment: The commenter stated that the outcome on improved training and continuing education for VR professionals in paragraph (c) of the priority appears to limit the target audience to State VR agencies and asked NIDRR to consider expanding it to include rehabilitation service vendors, employers, and people with disabilities. The commenter also noted that such an expansion may better align with the research requirements listed under paragraph (b) of this priority.

Discussion: The purpose of this priority, as conveyed in the opening paragraph, is to conduct research that will generate new knowledge about effective practices that can be used by State VR agencies to better serve their customers, including individuals with disabilities and their employers. Consistent with this purpose, paragraph (c) requires that the new knowledge be used to develop and disseminate materials that will improve training and continuing education on effective practices that can be used by VR State agencies in responding to workforce needs in a changing economy. Therefore, expanding paragraph (c) to engage in activities that improve the training and continuing education

of professionals outside of the State VR system is beyond the scope of this priority.

Changes: Our review of the priority in response to this comment indicated that paragraph (b) did not make clear that the focus of the intended outcome is improving services and strategies utilized by State VR agencies. Therefore, we have edited the opening sentence of paragraph (b) by adding the words "utilized by State VR agencies" to the end of the sentence.

Comment: None.

Discussion: The Department is committed to ensuring that all Department-sponsored Web sites and documents posted to them are accessible to individuals with disabilities. We inadvertently neglected to add such a requirement in the NPP.

Changes: NIDRR has amended paragraph (c) to require the RRTC's Web site, as well as documents posted on its Web site, to meet government or industry-recognized standards for accessibility.

FINAL PRIORITY:

Priority--Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Vocational Rehabilitation and Developing Strategies to Meet Employer Needs in Changing Economic Environments

The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services announces a priority for a Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Developing Strategies to Meet Employer Needs in Changing Economic Environments. This RRTC must conduct research that contributes to identifying effective VR practices

that take into account economic conditions, labor market trends, and employer needs. This RRTC will contribute to improved employment outcomes by generating new knowledge about effective practices that can be used by State VR agencies in serving their customers, including both program participants and employers. Under this priority, the RRTC must contribute to the following outcomes:

(a) New knowledge to improve responsiveness of VR agencies to employer workforce needs in a changing economy. The RRTC must contribute to this outcome by conducting research or development activities on effective ways for State VR agencies to assess employer needs and expectations in the changing economic environment in which businesses operate. The RRTC must conduct research to identify or develop effective strategic planning models that will support State VR agency efforts to anticipate and prepare for changing employer and labor market needs. In addition, the RRTC must conduct research to identify existing programs, e.g., Workforce Investment Act "Rapid Response" programs, that may be useful in helping VR agencies mitigate the impact of changing economic conditions. These research or development activities must include identifying methods of tracking, analyzing, and reacting to changing employer needs, including those related to economic conditions, such as analyses of labor market trends and analyses of projected growth areas.

(b) Improved job training, development, and placement services and strategies utilized by State VR agencies. The RRTC must contribute to this outcome by conducting research to identify or develop effective service delivery models that take into account current and future employer workforce needs, including needed job skills. Components of these models may include, but are not limited to: Employer partnerships to facilitate the identification of employer needs; incorporation of employer needs in planning job development, placement, and retention strategies; training opportunities to provide individuals with disabilities with skills that match employer needs; and strategic planning processes designed to respond to changing employer and economic needs.

(c) Improved training and continuing education for VR professionals. The RRTC must contribute to this outcome by developing and disseminating materials that incorporate findings from the research and development activities conducted under paragraphs (a) and (b) of this priority. These materials must be developed for use by State VR agencies to improve their ability to use information generated to develop strategies and services that will better meet the needs of employers in the context of local and regional economic and labor market conditions and to increase employment outcomes for VR participants. If the RRTC maintains a Web site with the purpose of disseminating these materials, the Web site must meet government or industry-recognized standards for accessibility.

Documents posted on the RRTC Web site must meet the accessibility standards set out at:
<http://www2.ed.gov/internal/internalguidelines.html>.

In addition, through coordination with the NIDRR Project Officer, this RRTC must--

(1) Collaborate with RSA's Regional Technical Assistance Network, including Regional Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) Centers to disseminate new knowledge to VR State agency personnel and key stakeholders; and

(2) Collaborate with NIDRR grantees that are conducting work relevant to this RRTC.

Types of Priorities:

When inviting applications for a competition using one or more priorities, we designate the type of each priority as absolute, competitive preference, or invitational through a notice in the Federal Register. The effect of each type of priority follows:

Absolute priority: Under an absolute priority, we consider only applications that meet the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(3)).

Competitive preference priority: Under a competitive preference priority, we give competitive preference to an application by (1) awarding additional points, depending on the extent to which the application meets the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i)); or (2) selecting an application that meets the priority over an application of comparable merit that does not meet the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(ii)).

Invitational priority: Under an invitational priority, we are particularly interested in applications that meet the priority. However, we do not give an application that meets the priority a preference over other applications (34 CFR 75.105(c)(1)).

This notice does not preclude us from proposing additional priorities, requirements, definitions, or selection criteria, subject to meeting applicable rulemaking requirements.

Note: This notice does not solicit applications. In any year in which we choose to use this priority, we invite applications through a notice in the Federal Register.

Executive Orders 12866 and 13563

Regulatory Impact Analysis

Under Executive Order 12866, the Secretary must determine whether this regulatory action is "significant" and, therefore, subject to the requirements of the Executive order and subject to review by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Section 3(f) of Executive Order 12866 defines a "significant regulatory action" as an action likely to result in a rule that may--

(1) Have an annual effect on the economy of \$100 million or more, or adversely affect a sector of the economy, productivity, competition, jobs, the environment, public health or safety, or State, local or Tribal governments or communities in a material way (also referred to as an "economically significant" rule);

(2) Create serious inconsistency or otherwise interfere with an action taken or planned by another agency;

(3) Materially alter the budgetary impacts of entitlement grants, user fees, or loan programs or the rights and obligations of recipients thereof; or

(4) Raise novel legal or policy issues arising out of legal mandates, the President's priorities, or the principles stated in the Executive order.

This final regulatory action is not a significant regulatory action subject to review by OMB under section 3(f) of Executive Order 12866.

We have also reviewed this regulatory action under Executive Order 13563, which supplements and explicitly reaffirms the principles, structures, and definitions governing regulatory review established in Executive Order 12866. To the extent permitted by law, Executive Order 13563 requires that an agency--

(1) Propose or adopt regulations only on a reasoned determination that their benefits justify their costs (recognizing that some benefits and costs are difficult to quantify);

(2) Tailor its regulations to impose the least burden on society, consistent with obtaining regulatory objectives and taking into account--among other things and to the extent practicable--the costs of cumulative regulations;

(3) In choosing among alternative regulatory approaches, select those approaches that maximize net benefits (including potential economic, environmental, public health and safety, and other advantages; distributive impacts; and equity);

(4) To the extent feasible, specify performance objectives, rather than the behavior or manner of compliance a regulated entity must adopt; and

(5) Identify and assess available alternatives to direct regulation, including economic incentives--such as user fees or marketable permits--to encourage the desired behavior, or provide information that enables the public to make choices.

Executive Order 13563 also requires an agency "to use the best available techniques to quantify anticipated present and future benefits and costs as accurately as possible." The Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs of OMB has emphasized that these techniques may include "identifying changing future compliance costs that might result from technological innovation or anticipated behavioral changes."

We are issuing this final priority only on a reasoned determination that its benefits justify its costs. In choosing among alternative regulatory approaches, we selected those approaches that maximize net benefits. Based on the analysis that follows, the Department believes that this regulatory action is consistent with the principles in Executive Order 13563.

We also have determined that this regulatory action would not unduly interfere with State, local, and Tribal governments in the exercise of their governmental functions.

In accordance with both Executive orders, the Department has assessed the potential costs and benefits, both quantitative and qualitative, of this regulatory action. The potential costs are those resulting from statutory requirements and those we have determined as necessary for administering the Department's programs and activities.

Summary of potential costs and benefits:

The benefits of the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Programs have been well established over the years in that similar projects have been completed successfully. This final priority will generate new knowledge through research and development.

Another benefit of this final priority is that the establishment of a new RRTC will improve the lives of individuals with disabilities. The new RRTC will generate, disseminate, and promote the use of new information that will contribute to improved employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

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Telephone: (202) 245-7363. If you use a TDD or TTY, call the FRS, toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

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Dated:

Alexa Posny,
Assistant Secretary for
Special Education and
Rehabilitative Services.

SECTION D

BACKGROUND STATEMENT

The Rehabilitation Act authorizes the establishment of the State VR Services Program (VR Program). This program is facing new challenges in the current economy, which has resulted in job losses for many American workers. During the period between 2007 and 2009, the size of the employed workforce decreased for all working-age persons. However, individuals with disabilities experienced a 12.3 percent employment rate decline, from 4.7 million to 4.2 million, as compared to a 3.4 percent employment rate decline for working-age adults without disabilities (Kaye, 2010). Furthermore, the length of time that individuals with disabilities remained unemployed during this period was 25 percent longer than the duration for individuals without disabilities (Fogg, Harrington & McMahon, 2010, 2011). There has also been a decrease in successful outcomes for consumers who received services through the VR program. In 2007, 205,447 (34.2 percent) of VR participants exited the program with employment. These figures declined to 171,904 (26 percent) of VR participants by 2010 (Rehabilitation Services Administration, 2012).

Employers' decisions to hire and retain workers are rooted in economic conditions and trends. Employers base hiring decisions on their need for workers to meet demands of their businesses (Banerij, McArthur, Mainardi & Ammann, 2009; Quelch & Jocz, 2009). Therefore, the ability to match VR program participants with employer needs is enhanced when rehabilitation professionals have an understanding of the dynamic economic

context in which individuals with disabilities and employers exist. For example, labor market variables such as unemployment rates and per-capita income have a significant influence on employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities (Government Accountability Office, 2007). VR professionals need to have an understanding of the economic environment in which prospective employers exist (e.g., which sectors of the economy are growing and which sectors are downsizing). Accordingly, if rehabilitation professionals are to improve employment outcomes of the individuals they serve, they will need to increase their knowledge of local, regional, and even national economic conditions and trends (Gilbridge & Stensurd, 2008).

A “demand side” model of VR views the needs of employers as a critical variable that is associated with employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities (Luecking, 2008; Unger, 2006). In this model, job development services focus on employer needs and are aimed at improving employers’ business outcomes (Luecking, 2008; Unger, 2007). In the VR context, demand side approaches focus not only on hiring, but also on job retention of employees with disabilities who may be at risk of exiting the workforce (Habeck, Kregel, Head & Yasuda, 2007). From this perspective, VR does not end at a single point in time (e.g., when an individual is hired), but is rather a dynamic, ongoing process in which rehabilitation professionals align the strengths and goals of workers with disabilities with the needs of employers.

Development of service delivery models that take into account changes in economic conditions and the subsequent impact on labor market conditions are necessary to ensure that State VR agencies provide services that meet the needs of individuals with disabilities and their employers. Research and development related to demand side models of employment service delivery can provide VR professionals with new tools to understand and address evolving employment challenges, including how to help ensure that individuals with disabilities have the skills needed to work in growing occupational sectors.

References:

Banerij, S., McArthur, N., Mainardi, C. & Ammann, C. (2009). Recession response: Why companies are making the wrong moves. Booz & Company.

Fogg, N. P., Harrington, P. E., & McMahon, B. T. (in press). The impact of the Great Recession on the unemployment of Americans with disabilities. Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Fogg, N. P., Harrington, P. E., & McMahon, B. T. (2011). The underemployment of persons with disabilities during the Great Recession. The Rehabilitation Professional, 19(1), 3-10.

Gilbridge, D., & Strensrud, R. (2008). Why won't they just do it? Rehabilitation Education, 22, 125-132.

Government Accountability Office (2007). Improved Information and Practices May Enhance State Agency Earnings Outcomes for SSA Beneficiaries. GAO Report 07-521.

- Habeck, R., Kregel, J., Head, C., & Yasuda, S. (2007). Salient and subtle aspects of demand side approaches for employment retention: Lessons for public policymakers.
- Kaye, H. S. (2010). The impact of the 2007-09 recession on workers with disabilities Monthly Labor Review, 133, 19-30.
- Luecking, R.G. (2008). Emerging employer views of people with disabilities and the future of job development. Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 29, 3-13.
- Quelch, J. and Jocz, K. (2009) How to market in a downturn, Harvard Business Review, 87, 4, 52-62.
- Rehabilitation Services Administration (2012). RSA-911 Case Service Report. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.
- Unger, D. (2007). Addressing employer personnel needs and improving employment training, job placement and retention for individuals with disabilities through public-private partnerships. Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 26, 39-48.

SECTION E

**Statutory and Regulatory Requirements of
RRTC's**

And

General RRTC Requirements

RRTC Program

The purpose of the RRTC program is to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, through advanced research, training, technical assistance, and dissemination activities in general problem areas, as specified by NIDRR. Such activities are designed to benefit rehabilitation service providers, individuals with disabilities, and the family members or other authorized representatives of individuals with disabilities. In addition, NIDRR intends to require all RRTC applicants to meet the requirements of the General Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTC) Requirements priority.

Statutory and Regulatory Requirements of RRTCs

RRTCs must--

- Carry out coordinated advanced programs of rehabilitation research;
- Provide training, including graduate, pre-service, and in-service training, to help rehabilitation personnel more effectively provide rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities;
- Provide technical assistance to individuals with disabilities, their representatives, providers, and other interested parties;
- Disseminate informational materials to individuals with disabilities, their representatives, providers, and other interested parties; and
- Serve as centers of national excellence in rehabilitation research for individuals with disabilities, their representatives, providers, and other interested parties.

Applicants for RRTC grants must also demonstrate in their applications how they will address, in whole or in part, the needs of individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds.

General Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) Requirements

Background:

NIDRR proposes the following General RRTC Requirements priority because it believes that the effectiveness of any RRTC depends on, among other things, how well the RRTC coordinates its research efforts with the research of other NIDRR-funded projects, involves individuals with disabilities in its activities, and identifies specific anticipated outcomes that are linked to its objectives in applying for RRTC funding.

Accordingly, NIDRR intends to use Priority--General RRTC Requirements in conjunction with all of the other RRTC priorities in any notice.

Final Priority:

To meet this priority, the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) must--

(a) Conduct a state-of-the-science conference on its respective area of research by the fourth year of the grant cycle and publish a comprehensive report on the final outcomes of the conference by the end of the fourth year of the grant cycle. This conference must include materials from the experts internal and external to the RRTC;

(b) Coordinate on research projects of mutual interest with relevant NIDRR-funded projects as identified through consultation with the NIDRR project officer;

(c) Involve individuals with disabilities in planning and implementing its research, training, and dissemination activities, and in evaluating the RRTC; and

(d) Coordinate with the appropriate NIDRR-funded Knowledge Translation Centers and professional and consumer organizations, to provide scientific results and information for dissemination to policymakers, service providers, researchers, and others.

SECTION F

SELECTION CRITERIA

(a) Responsiveness to an absolute or competitive priority (5 points total).

- (1) The Secretary considers the responsiveness of the application to an absolute or competitive priority published in the Federal Register.
- (2) In determining the application's responsiveness to the absolute or competitive priority, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - (i) The extent to which the applicant addresses all requirements of the absolute or competitive priority).
 - (ii) The extent to which the applicant's proposed activities are likely to achieve the purposes of the absolute or competitive priority.

(b) Design of research activities (45 points total).

- (1) The Secretary considers the extent to which the design of research activities is likely to be effective in accomplishing the objectives of the project.
- (2) In determining the extent to which the design is likely to be effective in accomplishing the objectives of the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - (i) The extent to which the research activities constitute a coherent, sustained approach to research in the field, including a substantial addition to the state-of-the-art).
 - (ii) The extent to which the methodology of each proposed research activity is meritorious, including consideration of the extent to which--
 - (A) The proposed design includes a comprehensive and informed review of the current literature, demonstrating knowledge of the state-of-the-art.
 - (B) Each research hypothesis is theoretically sound and based on current knowledge.
 - (C) Each sample population is appropriate and of sufficient size
 - (D) The data collection and measurement techniques are appropriate and likely to be effective; and
 - (E) The data analysis methods are appropriate.

(c) Design of dissemination activities (5 points total).

- (1) The Secretary considers the extent to which the design of dissemination activities is likely to be effective in accomplishing the objectives of the project.
- (2) In determining the extent to which the design is likely to be effective in accomplishing the objectives of the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - (i) The extent to which the methods for dissemination are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration.
 - (ii) The extent to which the information to be disseminated will be accessible to individuals with disabilities.

(d) Design of training activities (10 points total).

- (1) The Secretary considers the extent to which the design of training activities is likely to be effective in accomplishing the objectives of the project.
- (2) In determining the extent to which the design is likely to be effective in accomplishing the objectives of the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - (i) The extent to which the proposed training methods are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration.
 - (ii) The extent to which the proposed training content--
 - (A) If relevant, is based on new knowledge derived from research activities of the proposed project.
 - (iii) The extent to which the proposed training materials and methods are accessible to individuals with disabilities.

(e) Design of technical assistance activities (5 points total).

(1) The Secretary considers the extent to which the design of technical assistance activities is likely to be effective in accomplishing the objectives of the project.

(2) In determining the extent to which the design is likely to be effective in accomplishing the objectives of the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the methods for providing technical assistance are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration.

(ii) The extent to which the technical assistance is appropriate to the target population, including consideration of the knowledge level of the target population, needs of the target population, and format for providing information

(iii) The extent to which the technical assistance is accessible to individuals with disabilities.

(f) Plan of operation (5 points total).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the plan of operation.

(2) In determining the quality of the plan of operation, the Secretary considers the following factor:

(i) The adequacy of the plan of operation to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, and timelines for accomplishing project tasks.

(g) Adequacy and reasonableness of the budget (5 points total)

(1) The Secretary considers the adequacy and the reasonableness of the proposed budget.

(2) In determining the adequacy and the reasonableness of the proposed budget, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed project activities.

(ii) The extent to which the budget for the project, including any subcontracts, is adequately justified to support the proposed project activities.

(h) Plan of evaluation (5 points total).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the plan of evaluation.

(2) In determining the quality of the plan of evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the plan of evaluation provides for periodic assessment of progress toward--

(A) Implementing the plan of operation; and

(B) Achieving the project's intended outcomes and expected impacts.

(i) Project staff (10 points total).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the project staff.

(2) In determining the quality of the project staff, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(3) In addition, the Secretary considers the following:

(i) The extent to which the key personnel and other key staff have appropriate training and experience in disciplines required to conduct all proposed activities.

(ii) The extent to which the commitment of staff time is adequate to accomplish all the proposed activities of the project.

(j) **Adequacy and accessibility of resources** (5 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the adequacy and accessibility of the applicant's resources to implement the proposed project.

(2) In determining the adequacy and accessibility of resources, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the applicant is committed to provide adequate facilities, equipment, other resources, including administrative support, and laboratories, if appropriate.

(ii) The extent to which the facilities, equipment, and other resources are appropriately accessible to individuals with disabilities who may use the facilities, equipment, and other resources of the project.

SECTION G

PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

Protection of Human Subjects

Research activities involving human subjects supported by awards under these programs are subject to Department of Education Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects. You do **not** need an assurance or IRB approval as a condition of applying for this competition.

If you marked "Yes" for Item 3 of Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424, you must provide a human subjects "exempt research" or "nonexempt research" narrative. Insert the narrative(s) in the space provided. If you have multiple projects and need to provide more than one narrative, please indicate which project each set of responses addresses.

A. Exempt Research Narrative. If you marked "Yes" for item 3 a. and designated exemption numbers(s), provide the "exempt research" narrative. The narrative must contain sufficient information about the involvement of human subjects in the proposed research to allow a determination by ED that the designated exemption(s) are appropriate. The narrative must be succinct. In addition, narratives are required for each participating partner if research is being conducted at other sites.

B. Nonexempt Research Narrative. If you marked "No" for item 3 a. you must provide the "nonexempt research" narrative. The narrative must address the seven points. Although no specific page limitation applies to this section of the application, be succinct.

Copies of the Department of Education regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects as well as other documents are available on the website below. For more information call (202) 260-3353 or go on-line the Protection of Human Subjects in research Web Site:

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/humansub.html>

SECTION H

APPLICATION FORMAT AND INSTRUCTIONS

APPLICATION FORMAT AND INSTRUCTIONS

Applications for grants under this program must be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov apply site (grants.gov) by the closing date unless you qualify for an exception to this requirement.

It is recommended that your electronic (or paper application if you have requested and been approved for a waiver), be organized in the following manner and include the following:

NOTE: You will be uploading sections of your application by heading. There is a heading for (1) Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424); (2) Table of Contents; (3) Abstract; (4) ED Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED-524); (5) Budget Narrative; (6) Project Narrative; (7) General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Requirements – Section 427; (8) GG Lobbying Form (90-0013); (9) Faith Based Survey on EEO; (10) ED Supplemental Form for SF 424; (11) SF LLL Disclosure of Lobbying; and (12) Vitae/Bibliography/Letters of Support. There is a file-size limitation to each section and you may only upload one document under each heading. Therefore, in order to make sure that all of your materials are uploaded successfully, you will need to combine multiple original documents for a heading (e.g., letters, resumes) into a single document before uploading.

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424)

This form requires basic identifying information about the applicant and the application.

- Applicants should note that there are multiple RRTC's open and use the **RELEVANT** CFDA and Title from the NFP/NIA as the title.

2. Table of Contents

- The Table of Contents shows where and how the important sections of your proposal are organized.
- While the application will be submitted electronically, the reviewers will use printed copies during the review process. The Table of Contents will assist them in more efficiently and effectively evaluating your application.
- Upload the Table of Contents to Optional Forms: Other Narrative.

3. Abstract

- The ONE-PAGE abstract should be a comprehensive description of what the whole (all years) project is, not a description of the competency of the institution or project director. It is not an executive summary. It can be single or double-spaced.
- Upload the Abstract to ED.

4. ED Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED-524)

- Remember that you must provide complete budget information for each year of the proposed project. Use the Budget Narrative heading to upload.

- Please report Federal Funds in section A – Budget Summary and Non-Federal Funds in Section B – Budget Summary.
- Specific instructions for completing the budget forms are provided within this application package.

Name: Enter the Name of the applicant organization(s) or institution(s) in the space provided.

Personnel (Line 1): Enter project personnel salaries and wages only. Include fees and expenses for consultants on line 6.

Fringe Benefits (Line 2): The institution's normal fringe benefits contribution may be charged to the program. Leave this line blank if fringe benefits applicable to direct salaries and wages are treated as part of the indirect cost.

Travel (Line 3): Indicate the travel costs of employees and participants only. Include travel of persons such as consultants and trainees on line 6.

Equipment (Line 4): Indicate the cost of tangible, non-expendable personal property that has usefulness greater than one year and acquisition costs that are the lesser of the capitalization level established by the applicant entity for financial statement purposes or \$5,000 per article. Lower limits may be established to maintain consistency with the applicant's policy.

Supplies (line 5): Show all tangible personal property except that on line 4.

Contractual (line 6): The contractual category should include all costs specifically incurred with actions that the applicant takes in conjunction with an established internal procurement system. Include consultant fees, expenses, and travel costs in this category if the consultant's services are obtained through a written binding agreement or contract.

Construction (line 7): Not applicable.

Other (line 8): Indicate all direct costs not covered on lines 1-6. For example, include costs such as space rental, required fees, honoraria and travel (where a contract is not in place for services), stipends, training, and communication and printing costs.

Total Direct Costs (line 9): The sum of lines 1-8.

Indirect Costs (line 10): There is no restricted indirect cost rate for this program. Use your institution's federally negotiated rate.

Training Stipends (line 11): There are three types of projects that might include budget requests for stipends, tuition allowance, or other types of similar charges to support the objectives of the project:

- ☐ Fellowship or Scholarship Programs
- ☐ Educational Training Projects

- ☐ Projects where students receive tuition remission or other forms of compensation, as, or in lieu of wages.

Total Cost (line 12): This should equal to sum of lines 9-11 (total direct costs + indirect + stipends). The sum for column one, labeled *Project Year 1* (a), should also be equal to item 18a on the application cover sheet (SF Form 424).

Cost Share: There is no mandatory cost sharing for this program. If you are providing voluntary cost share Please include this information on the ED Form 524, Section B – Budget Summary, Non-Federal Funds – Tab 2 and in your budget narrative.

5. Budget Narrative

- This part requires an itemized budget breakdown for the project year and the basis for estimating the costs of personnel salaries, benefits, project staff travel, materials and supplies, consultants and subcontracts, indirect costs and any other projected expenditures.
- Address Cost Share in a separate section of the budget narrative labeled “Cost Share”.
- Please provide an itemized budget breakdown for each project year.
- Upload the Budget Narrative to the Budget Narrative Section.

6. Project Narrative

- The application narrative responds to the Statutory, Regulatory and General RRTC Requirements found in Section E and Selection Criteria found in Section F of this application package. The reviewers will use this section to evaluate your application.
- Upload the Project Narrative to the Project Narrative Section.

Each applicant is encouraged to limit the project narrative to the equivalent of no more than 125 pages, using the following standards:

- A “page” is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.
- Double-space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs.
- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch).
- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New or Arial.
- Include all critical information in the program narrative, minimizing the need for additional appendices.

NOTE: The recommended page limit does not apply to the Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424); the budget narrative; the forms; the one page abstract; the resumes; the bibliography; or the letters of support. However, the recommended page limit does apply to all of the project narrative section.

7. General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Requirements – Section 427

- Section 427 requires each applicant for funds (other than an individual person) to include in its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs.

8. GG Lobbying Form (90-0013)

- Instructions for completing this form are included on the grants.gov website.

9. Faith Based Survey on EEO

- Instructions for completing this form are included on the grants.gov website.

10. ED Supplemental Form for SF 424

- Instructions for completing this form are included on the grants.gov website.

11. SF LLL Disclosure of Lobbying

- Instructions for completing this form are included on the grants.gov website.

12. Vitae/Bibliography/Letters of Support

- Vitae of staff or consultants should include the individual's title and role in the proposed project, and other information that is specifically pertinent to this proposed project.
- If collaboration with another organization is involved in the proposed activity, the application should include assurances of participation by the other parties, including written agreements or assurances of cooperation. Upload the Vitae/Bibliography/Letters of Support to the Other Attachments- Optional Section.

SECTION I

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
AND
DUNS NUMBER INSTRUCTIONS**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. CAN I GET AN EXTENSION OF THE DUE DATE?

In the case of most competitions the answer is no. On rare occasions the Department of Education may extend a closing date for all applicants. If that occurs, a notice of the revised due date is published in the Federal Register, this extension will identify who is eligible to apply for a given competition. There are no extensions or exceptions to the due date made for individual applicants. Additionally, there are provisions for extension for Grants.gov, per the guidance included in the application package.

2. WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE APPLICATION?

The application should include the following: (1) Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424); (2) Table of Contents; (3) Abstract; (4) ED Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED-524); (5) Budget Narrative; (6) Project Narrative; (7) General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Requirements – Section 427; (8) GG Lobbying Form (90-0013); (9) Faith Based Survey on EEO; (10) ED Supplemental Form for SF 424; (11) SF LLL Disclosure of Lobbying; and (12) Vitae/Bibliography/Letters of Support. If collaboration with another organization or individual is involved in any proposed activity, the application should include assurances of participation by the other parties, including written agreements or letters of cooperation. It is not useful to include general letters of support or endorsement in the application. If the applicant proposes to use unique tests or other measurement instruments that are not widely known in the field, it would be helpful to include the instrument in the application. Many applications contain voluminous appendices that are not helpful and in many cases cannot even be mailed to the reviewers. It is generally not helpful to include such things as brochures, general capability statements of collaborating organizations, maps, copies of publications, or descriptions of other projects completed by the applicant.

3. WHAT FORMAT SHOULD BE USED FOR THE APPLICATION?

NIDRR generally advises applicants to organize the project narrative to follow the selection criteria. The specific review criteria vary according to the specific programs and are included in this application package. Additionally, applicants should provide clearly stated hypotheses or research questions, goals, objectives, expected outcomes, and public benefit of the research or development project. The application should be organized to provide a thorough description of the methods and target population(s) and supported by evidence of need for the project, as identified in the relevant literature; citations are useful and may strengthen the proposal. Specific information on the format can be found in Section H – Application Format and Instructions of this application package.

4. ARE THERE PAGE LIMITS TO MY APPLICATION?

The application narrative is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. We recommend that you limit the application narrative to the equivalent of no more than 125 pages, using the following standards: (1) A “page” is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides; (2) Double-space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations,

references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs; (3) Use a font that is either 12 point or larger or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch); (4) Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New or Arial; and (5) Include all critical information in the program narrative, minimizing the need for additional appendices. Ensure that you attach **.PDF files only** for any attachments to your application. PDF files are the only Education approved file type accepted as detailed in the Federal Register application notice. Applicants must submit individual .PDF files only when attaching files to their application.

5. MAY I SUBMIT APPLICATIONS TO MORE THAN ONE OPEN NIDRR PROGRAM COMPETITION AT A TIME OR MORE THAN ONE APPLICATION TO A PARTICULAR PROGRAM COMPETITION?

Yes. You may submit more than one application in any given competition. You may submit to as many open competitions, for which an application is responsive to the program requirements. However, each competition is unique and the selection criteria will vary from one competition to another. It is important that each separate application include the required materials for that particular competition.

6. DO I NEED AN ABSTRACT AND WHAT SHOULD IT INCLUDE?

Yes, you do need an abstract. The abstract is used by both the peer reviewers and the program staff in the review and processing of the application. The ONE-PAGE abstract should be a comprehensive description of the project (all years), not a description of the competency of the institution or project director. It is not an executive summary. It can be single or double-spaced. Upload to ED Abstract.

7. WHAT IS THE ALLOWABLE INDIRECT COST RATE?

An applicant for a Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (133B) program may not collect more than 15% of the total grant award as indirect cost charges. The applicant must have a current indirect cost rate agreement to charge indirect costs to a grant. The maximum amount of the award includes both direct and indirect costs (ED Budget Information non-Construction programs (ED-524). The Department's Indirect Cost Group has more information on what you should know about indirect cost rates, at its Web site: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/fipao/abouticg.html>

8. CAN PROFIT MAKING BUSINESSES APPLY FOR GRANTS?

Yes; however, for-profit organizations will not be able to collect a fee or profit on the grant.

9. CAN INDIVIDUALS APPLY FOR GRANTS?

Individuals are not eligible to apply for Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers Program.

10. CAN NIDRR STAFF ADVISE ME WHETHER MY PROJECT IS OF INTEREST TO NIDRR OR LIKELY TO BE FUNDED?

No. NIDRR staff can only advise you of the requirements of the program in which you propose to submit your application. However, staff cannot advise you as to whether or not your subject area or proposed approach is likely to receive approval.

11. HOW DO I ENSURE THAT MY APPLICATION WILL BE REVIEWED UNDER THE CORRECT COMPETITION?

Applicants must clearly include the competition title and CFDA number, on the Standard Form 424, and include a project title that describes the project, based on the competition.

12. HOW SOON AFTER SUBMITTING MY APPLICATION CAN I FIND OUT IF IT WILL BE FUNDED?

The time from closing date to grant award date varies from program to program. Generally speaking, NIDRR makes awards within six to seven months after the closing date. Unsuccessful applicants generally will be notified within that time frame as well. When NIDRR is able to release information on the status of grant applications, it will notify applicants by letter. This information is **not** posted on the NIDRR homepage or the Grants.gov website.

13. WHAT START DATE SHOULD I USE ON MY APPLICATION?

For the purpose of estimating a project start date, the applicant should estimate approximately six to seven months from the closing date, preferably October 1. You must have a start date that allows you to complete an Annual Performance Report (APR) by May 31st with a minimum of six month of activities to report on.

14. IF MY APPLICATION IS SUCCESSFUL, CAN I ASSUME I WILL GET THE REQUESTED BUDGET AMOUNT IN SUBSEQUENT YEARS?

No. Funding in subsequent years is subject to availability of funds and project performance.

15. WILL ALL APPROVED APPLICATIONS BE FUNDED?

No. Peer review can result in more applications being determined to be worthy of consideration for funding than available resources allow. Unsuccessful applicants are encouraged to consider resubmitting applications in future competitions. Funded applications will be notified in the manner described in #12.

16. DO I HAVE TO INCLUDE COST SHARE IN MY APPLICATION?

No, cost share for this program is voluntary. If you include cost share, the information should be reflected on the ED 524 form, Section B (Budget Summary Non Federal Funds) and the budget justification.

17. WHAT DO I NEED TO DO ABOUT HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION IN MY RESEARCH?

If you are planning research involving human subjects at any time during the project period, you check “Yes” in the Human Subjects section of the ED supplement to the SF 424 form. If you checked “Yes,” you need to indicate whether the research is exempt or not exempt from the protection of human subjects requirements of EDGAR part 97 and if you have an IRB number. You will need to fill out the human subjects narrative for each site where the research is being conducted. The program and the Department’s human subjects staff review the applicant’s response against the application itself to determine its accuracy. They contact you for additional information or clarification, if needed. More information can be found in the instructions for the SF 424 form and in this application package in the Human Subjects section.

18. MUST I SUBMIT MY APPLICATION VIA GRANTS.GOV?

Applications for grants for this competition must be submitted electronically using the Governmentwide Grants.gov Apply site at www.Grants.gov. Through this site, you will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit your application. You may not e-mail an electronic copy of a grant application to us. **We will reject your application if you submit it in paper format unless, you qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement and submit, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that you qualify for one of these exceptions.**

19. HOW WILL I RECEIVE FUNDING FOR THE ADDITIONAL YEARS OF MY GRANT (CONTINUATION AWARD)?

In making a continuation award, the Secretary may consider under 34 CFR 75.253, the extent to which a grantee has made “substantial progress toward meeting the objectives in its approved application.” This consideration includes the review of a grantee’s progress in meeting the targets and projected outcomes in its approved application, and whether the grantee has expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and budget. In making a continuation grant, the Secretary also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance with the assurances in its approved application, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23)

NOTE:

DUNS NUMBER INSTRUCTIONS

NOTE: Check with your fiscal office to see if your institution has an assigned DUNS before contacting Dun & Bradstreet

D-U-N-S No.: Please provide the applicant's D-U-N-S Number. You can obtain your D-U-N-S Number at no charge by calling **1-800-234-3867** or by completing a D-U-N-S Number Request Form. The form can be obtained via the Internet at the following URL:

http://www.dnb.com/US/duns_update/index.html

The D-U-N-S Number is a unique nine digit number that does not convey any information about the recipient. A built in check digit helps assure the accuracy of the D-U-N-S Number. The ninth digit of each number is the check digit, which is mathematically related to the other digits. It lets computer systems determine if a D-U-N-S Number has been entered correctly.

Dun & Bradstreet, a global information services provider, has assigned D-U-N-S numbers to over 43 million companies worldwide. **Live help Monday-Friday 8am-6pm (EST) Dial 1.800.234.3867**

Note: Electronic submission via Grants.gov must use DUNS number your organization used when it registered in the Central Contractor Registry.

SECTION J

GRANTS.GOV SUBMISSION PROCEDURES AND TIPS FOR APPLICANTS

APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS

IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ FIRST

U.S. Department of Education *Grants.gov Submission Procedures and Tips for Applicants*

To facilitate your use of Grants.gov, this document includes important submission procedures you need to be aware of to ensure your application is received in a timely manner and accepted by the Department of Education.

ATTENTION – Adobe Forms and PDF Files Required

Applications submitted to Grants.gov for the Department of Education will be posted using Adobe forms. Therefore, applicants will need to download the latest version of Adobe reader (at least Adobe Reader 8.1.2). Information on computer and operating system compatibility with Adobe and links to download the latest version is available on Grants.gov. We strongly recommend that you review these details on www.Grants.gov before completing and submitting your application. In addition, applicants should submit their application a day or two in advance of the closing date as detailed below. Also, applicants are required to upload their attachments in .pdf format only. (See details below under “Attaching Files – Additional Tips.”) If you have any questions regarding this matter please email the Grants.gov Contact Center at support@grants.gov or call 1-800-518-4726.

Also, applicants should be aware that on October 11, 2010, Grants.gov implemented a new security build which requires each organization’s e-Biz POC (Point of Contact) update their Grants.gov registration. To complete this step, the e-Biz POC must have their DUNS number and CCR MPIN. We recommend this step be completed several days before application submission unless the e-Biz POC has already responded to this requirement. For more information on this topic, please visit this Grants.gov information link: <http://www.grants.gov/securitycommebiz/>.

- 1) **REGISTER EARLY** – Grants.gov registration may take five or more business days to complete. You may begin working on your application while completing the registration process, but you cannot submit an application until all of the Registration steps are complete. For detailed information on the Registration Steps, please go to: http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp. [Note: Your organization will need to update its Central Contractor Registry (CCR) registration annually.]
- 2) **SUBMIT EARLY** – We strongly recommend that you do not wait until the last day to submit your application. Grants.gov will put a date/time stamp on your application and then process it after it is fully uploaded. The time it takes to upload an application will vary depending on a number of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection, and the time it takes Grants.gov to process the application will vary as well. If Grants.gov rejects your application (see step three below), you will need to resubmit successfully before 4:30:00 p.m. Washington, DC time on the deadline date.

Note: To submit successfully, you must provide the DUNS number on your application that was used when you registered as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) on Grants.gov. This DUNS number is typically the same number used when your organization registered with the CCR (Central Contractor Registry). If you do not enter the same DUNS number on your application as the DUNS you registered with, Grants.gov will reject your application.

- 3) **VERIFY SUBMISSION IS OK** – You will want to verify that Grants.gov and the Department of Education receive your Grants.gov submission timely and that it was validated successfully. To see the date/time your application was received, login to Grants.gov and click on the Track My Application link. For a successful submission, the date/time received should be earlier than 4:30:00 p.m. Washington, DC time, on the deadline date, AND the application status should be: Validated, Received by Agency, or Agency Tracking Number Assigned.

If the date/time received is later than 4:30:00 p.m. Washington, D.C. time, on the deadline date, your application is late. If your application has a status of “Received” it is still awaiting validation by Grants.gov. Once validation is complete, the status will either change to “Validated” or “Rejected with Errors.” If the status is “Rejected with Errors,” your application has not been received successfully. Some of the reasons Grants.gov may reject an application can be found on the Grants.gov site: http://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant_faqs.jsp#54. For more detailed information on

troubleshooting Adobe errors, you can review the Adobe Reader Error Messages document at <http://www.grants.gov/assets/AdobeReaderErrorMessages.pdf>. If you discover your application is late or has been rejected, please see the instructions below. Note: You will receive a series of confirmations both online and via e-mail about the status of your application. Please do not rely solely on e-mail to confirm whether your application has been received timely and validated successfully.

Submission Problems – What should you do?

If you have problems submitting to Grants.gov before the closing date, please contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or <http://www.grants.gov/contactus/contactus.jsp>, or use the customer support available on the Web site: http://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant_help.jsp.

If electronic submission is optional and you have problems that you are unable to resolve before the deadline date and time for electronic applications, please follow the transmittal instructions for hard copy applications in the Federal Register notice and get a hard copy application postmarked by midnight on the deadline date.

If electronic submission is required, you must submit an electronic application before 4:30:00 p.m., unless you follow the procedures in the Federal Register notice and qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement and submit, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that you qualify for one of these exceptions. (See the Federal Register notice for detailed instructions.)

Helpful Hints When Working with Grants.gov

Please note, once you download an application from Grants.gov, you will be working offline and saving data on your computer. Please be sure to note where you are saving the Grants.gov file on your computer. You will need to logon to Grants.gov to upload and submit the application.

You must provide the DUNS number on your application that was used when you registered as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) on Grants.gov.

Please go to http://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant_help.jsp for help with Grants.gov. For additional tips related to submitting grant applications, please refer to the Grants.gov Submit Application FAQs found on the Grants.gov http://www.grants.gov/help/submit_application_faqs.jsp.

Dial-Up Internet Connections

When using a dial up connection to upload and submit your application, it can take significantly longer than when you are connected to the Internet with a high-speed connection, e.g. cable modem/DSL/T1. While times will vary depending upon the size of your application, it can take a few minutes to a few hours to complete your grant submission using a dial up connection. If you do not have access to a high-speed connection and electronic submission is required, you may want to consider following the instructions in the Federal Register notice to obtain an exception to the electronic submission requirement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date. (See the Federal Register notice for detailed instructions.)

MAC Users

For MAC compatibility information, review the Operating System Platform Compatibility Table at the following Grants.gov link: http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp. **If electronic submission is required and you are concerned about your ability to submit electronically as a non-windows user, please follow instructions in the Federal Register notice to obtain an exception to the electronic submission requirement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date. (See the Federal Register notice for detailed instructions.)**

Attaching Files – Additional Tips

Please note the following tips related to attaching files to your application, especially the requirement that applicants **only include .pdf files** in their application:

1. **Ensure that you attach .PDF files only for any attachments to your application. PDF files are the only Education approved file type accepted as detailed in the Federal Register application notice. Applicants must submit individual .PDF files only when attaching files to their application. Specifically, the Department will not accept any attachments that contain files within a file, such as PDF Portfolio files. Any attachments uploaded that are not .PDF files or are password protected files will not be read. If you need assistance converting your files to a .pdf format, please refer to this Grants.gov webpage with links to conversion programs: http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp#pdf_conversion_programs**
2. Grants.gov cannot process an application that includes two or more files that have the same name within a grant submission. Therefore, each file uploaded to your application package should have a unique file name.
3. When attaching files, applicants should follow the guidelines established by Grants.gov on the size and content of file names. Uploaded files must be less than 50 characters, contain no spaces, no special characters (example: -, &, *, %, /, #, \) including periods (.), blank spaces and accent marks. Applications submitted that do not comply with the Grants.gov guidelines will be rejected at Grants.gov and not forwarded to the Department.
4. Applicants should limit the size of their file attachments. Documents submitted that contain graphics and/or scanned material often greatly increase the size of the file attachments and can result in difficulties opening the files. For reference, the average discretionary grant application package totals 1 to 2 MB. Therefore, you may want to check the total size of your package before submission.

2/2011

APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR MAIL OR HAND DELIVERY IF A WAIVER HAS BEEN OBTAINED

Submission of Paper Applications by Mail.

If you submit your application in paper format by mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier), you must mail the original and two copies of your application, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address:

By mail through the U.S. Postal Service:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: (CFDA number 84.133B-1)
LBJ Basement Level 1
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202-4260

Regardless of which address you use, you must show proof of mailing consisting of one of the following:

- (1) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark.
- (2) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service.
- (3) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier.
- (4) Any other proof of mailing acceptable to the Secretary of the U.S.

Department of Education.

If you mail your application through the U.S. Postal Service, we do not accept either of the following as proof of mailing:

- (1) A private metered postmark.
- (2) A mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service.

If your application is postmarked after the application deadline date, we will not consider your application.

Note: The U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Before relying on this method, you should check with your local post office.

c. Submission of Paper Applications by Hand Delivery.

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you (or a courier service) may deliver your paper application to the Department by hand. You must deliver the original and two copies of your application by hand, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: (CFDA Number 84.133B-1)
550 12th Street, SW.
Room 7041, Potomac Center Plaza
Washington, DC 20202-4260

The Application Control Center accepts hand deliveries daily between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, except Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays.

Note for Mail or Hand Delivery of Paper Applications: If you mail or hand deliver your application to the Department--

(1) You must indicate on the envelope and--if not provided by the Department--in Item 11 of the SF 424 the CFDA number, including suffix letter, if any, of the competition under which you are submitting your application; and

(2) The Application Control Center will mail to you a notification of receipt of your grant application. If you do not receive this notification within 15 business days from the application deadline date, you should call the U.S. Department of Education Application Control Center at (202) 245-6288.

SECTION K

**REQUIRED FORMS
AND
FORM INSTRUCTIONS**

APPLICATION FORMS

All electronic and paper (if a waiver has been submitted and approved) applications submitted to NIDRR must include the following forms/parts:

- Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424)
- Table of Contents
- Abstract
- ED Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED-524)
- Budget Narrative
- Project Narrative
- General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Requirements – Section 427
- GG Lobbying Form (90-0013)
- Faith Based Survey on EEO
- ED Supplemental Form for SF 424
- SF LLL Disclosure of Lobbying
- Vitae/Bibliography/Letters of Support

A separate application must be submitted for each grant sought. No grant may be awarded unless the completed application forms have been received. All above forms are mandatory and must be submitted with the application. If an item does not appear to be relevant, write "NA" for not applicable.

Instructions for each form are provided on the Grants.gov website.

SECTION L

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- [] Did you complete the registration process for e-Application for the mandatory electronic submission on **<http://e-grants.ed.gov>**?

Does your application include each of the following?

- [] Cover page (SF 424) marked appropriately with **84.133B-1**
Download of correct package for **84.133B-1** applying electronically
- [] Priority Topic identified in the Descriptive Title in Block 11 of the SF 424?
- [] Budget form (ED form 524) with dollar amounts not exceeding the maximum in any year?
- [] Voluntary Cost Share included both on the “B” side of the ED 524 and explained in the budget narrative for each year?
- [] Budget narrative for each year with arithmetic checked for accuracy
- [] Program narrative, including abstract and responses to the selection criteria
- [] Assurances and Certifications (from the forms list in section K)
- [] Correctly uploaded files on e-Application?
- [] Narrative on the Protection of Human Subjects?

Did you do each of the following?

- [] Submit application on or before **August 27, 2012**?
- [] Fully complete the upload of your application and receive successful validation of the submission before 4:30:00 pm, Washington, D.C. time on the closing date?
- [] Provide 1 original and 2 copies of the application if submitting by post, hand-delivery or carrier service (Although not required, 1 original and 9 copies are requested and a disk copy) – if you obtained a waiver?

PAPERWORK BURDEN STATEMENT

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 200 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefits, per the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Rehabilitation Act) (29 U.S.C. 701 et seq.) (Program authority: 29 U.S.C. 762(g) and 764(a)). Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20210-4537 or email ICDocketMgr@ed.gov and reference the OMB Control Number 1820-0027. Note: Please do not return the completed Disability Rehabilitation Research Project Application package to this address.

GRANT APPLICATION RECEIPT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

If you fail to receive the notification of application within fifteen (15) days from the closing date, call:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
(202) 245-6288

GRANT AND CONTRACT FUNDING INFORMATION

The Department of Education provides information about grant and contract opportunities electronically in several ways:

ED Internet Home Page <http://www.ed.gov/>